

**Laura Burke**

***Germs and Ghosts: Transmission of Health and Environment in Timor-Leste***

What do Germs and Ghosts have in common? How do they intersect at times of crisis? Southeast Asia is at the forefront of continuing and emergent health and environmental catastrophes. From endemic dengue to climate change-induced disasters to Asian swine flu and global pandemics including SARs and COVID-19. In Timor-Leste, and many other parts of Southeast Asia, the interrelationship between germs (viruses, disease, illness) and ghosts (spirits, ancestors and the dead) are part of indigenous animist beliefs which are widespread across the region. This project explores how these ethereal, yet sometimes tangible, agents relate to humans and each other. Working in collaboration with community radio stations, an overlooked but important source of health and environmental information in rural areas, this project aims to address epistemic injustice and broaden biomedical approaches to health and environment.